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Agenda item 4
Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau

Programme budget implications of draft decision E/2002/L.38

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

I. Requests contained in the draft decision

1. Under the terms of the draft decision contained in E/2002/L.38, the Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 and its decision 2002/302 of 4 October 2002, on the establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict, would decide:

(a) To establish an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to examine its humanitarian and economic needs, and review relevant programmes of support and prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support, based on its development priorities through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability, as well as provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community was adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective and promoted synergy;

(b) To appoint the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of South Africa, Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, the Netherlands and Portugal to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and to appoint the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations as Chairperson of the Group;

(c) That the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau would invite the participation in the work of the Group of the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Croatia, in his capacity as President of the Economic and Social

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Council, the Gambia, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, and Mauritius, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa;

(d) Request the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to submit a report on its recommendations to the Council by mid-January 2003.

II. Activities by which the decision would be implemented

2. Pursuant to paragraph 20 of the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict (E/2002/12 and Corr.1), it is expected that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, would:

(a) Engage in consultations with and obtain the necessary information from relevant authorities, representatives and officials of national and international bodies and other organizations;

(b) Assess humanitarian and economic needs in Guinea-Bissau and prepare a long-term programme of support that aimed at the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability;

(c) Provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community in supporting Guinea-Bissau was adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective;

(d) Recommend its findings for adoption by the Council and for consideration in other appropriate settings. In doing so, the Advisory Group would take into account the unique character and needs of the situations in Guinea-Bissau being considered.

III. Estimated resource requirements

3. In order to carry out the activities enumerated in paragraph 2 above, it is envisaged that the Advisory Group would undertake consultation missions to Guinea-Bissau and Washington, D.C, estimated at $49,700 and $8,800, respectively.

IV. Potential for absorption during the biennium 2002-2003

4. It is anticipated that conference-servicing costs required for servicing the Advisory Group would be negligible and would therefore be met within resources available under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conferences services, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

5. Following review of the potential for absorption of the resource requirements arising from the draft decision within the appropriations approved under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, it is considered that only substantive servicing of the Advisory Group could be provided by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs within the resources

approved under section 9. No possibilities exist under the section for absorption of the requirements of $58,800 for travel, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses of the members of the Advisory Group and of the other three Permanent Representatives to the United Nations mentioned in paragraph 1 (c) above.

6. Given the nature of the relationship between the activities to be carried out by the Advisory Group and the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), the resources of which are provided for under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, and whose mandate includes providing the political framework and leadership for harmonizing and integrating the activities of the United Nations system in the country, the Secretary-General proposes that the estimated requirements of $58,500 be met through the use of resources approved for UNOGBIS as a one-time arrangement, so that the Advisory Group may report to the Council by mid-January 2003, as requested. There should be a clear understanding, however, that this is an exceptional arrangement, proposed in order for the Advisory Group to initiate the process, and will not set a precedent with respect to financing similar activities from other, similar political missions. It should be understood that any additional costs over and above the amount of $58,500 arising from the implementation by the Advisory Group of its mandate, or from the decision that Council may take on the basis of the Advisory Group's report, would not be met from the resources appropriated for UNOGBIS.